

Supervisor Romaine Holds Meeting with Community Leaders to Discuss New York State Grant for Clean Up and Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites in Bellport

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Romaine and Councilwoman Kepert call plan a "catalyst for change" in the community

Farmingville, NY - Supervisor Ed Romaine (pictured above), Councilwoman Connie Kepert and Brookhaven Town Planning officials held a community leaders meeting today at the Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area to explain the scope of work to be performed under the NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Grant. The \$303,957 grant will fund an in-house Implementation Land Use Plan (LUP) and Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS) that addresses 24 distressed and underutilized brownfield sites located within an 800-acre area of Greater Bellport. The town has also provided a partial match of \$65,717 that brings the total amount to \$369,674.

Many residents and community leaders attended the meeting, including Bellport Mayor Raymond Fell, South Country School District Superintendent Dr. Joseph Giani, Bishop Ralph L. Jefferson from the Jefferson Temple of God, Pastor Anthony Seaton from the Victory Church of God, Fred Combs from the Hagerman and East Patchogue Housing Alliance, John Rogers, Chairman of the Greater Bellport Coalition and South Country Ambulance Company Chief Greg Miglino.

In his opening remarks, Supervisor Romaine explained that the plan will form feasible, strategic development projects and other actions to invite investment and spur revitalization in the area. He said, "Cleaning up these 24 brownfield sites will increase property values and serve as a catalyst for positive change in Bellport. It's a very smart investment by the State and Town that will pay big dividends for the residents and business owners who have been working long and hard to improve this community."

Councilwoman Kepert said, "The redevelopment of these 24 sites in the Greater Bellport area is a key aspect to the revitalization and recovery of the community as a whole," stated Councilwoman Kepert. "I am happy to see the State and Town working hand-in-hand to move forward the rejuvenation of these Brownfield sites. The implementation of this plan will create sites that are community assets and will attract businesses and jobs while bringing in new tax revenue to a once blighted area."

The Town's Planning Commissioner Tulio Bertoli, and other officials from his office, provided an overview of the revitalization plan for an 800-acre area with 24 brownfield sites located in the Greater Bellport area. It will be

completed by Town employees with the Traffic Impact Study, the Economic Analysis Report and environmental testing completed by consultants after an open bid selection process.

A plan for the redevelopment of the area impacted by the brownfield sites will be prepared, as well as an Environmental Impact Statement. Once the sites are assessed, predictable and clear recommendations for redevelopment will be compiled in a hamlet-specific Greater Bellport Land Use Plan. It will comply with New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations prior to adoption by the Town Board which will amend the Town's 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This will be a 56-week project, scheduled to begin once the contract has been executed later this spring. Approval of the contract takes approximately three to four months.

Brownfields is a blanket term used to describe all abandoned or underused sites where redevelopment or reuse is complicated by the real or perceived presence of contamination. For many, the term conjures images of large-scale industrial properties, but in reality brownfields come in all shapes and sizes - from an abandoned restaurant or under-utilized manufacturing plant covering several acres, to a vacant single family home with lead paint or asbestos insulation.

Redeveloped brownfields have increased property values by between five and 15 percent within a quarter mile of the redeveloped site. Once redeveloped, brownfield sites become community assets that can attract businesses, jobs and ultimately expand the local tax base by turning dormant sites into vibrant properties, helping to revitalize once blighted areas.

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